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CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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SMASH RACIST ICE TERROR

TEXAS, March 19—Hundreds of workers and students from San Antonio and Austin, Texas protested at Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) headquarters over the racist denial of a "discretionary extension of time" before deportation for three people, including a child. Recently, these three immigrant workers took so-called sanctuary inside of a church in Austin, militantly sending protestors instead of appearing themselves for their ICE appointments.

ICE officials said that arrest warrants would be issued, highlighting ICE's increasingly fascist new plan to refuse to grant or extend the discretionary extension of time—meaning to delay deportations—for most people. It means that the Donald Trump administration seeks to arrest and deport nearly all asylum-seekers, escalating anti-immigrant racism from the already-increased Barack Obama-era levels.

Yet a revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party grows deep in the heart of Texas, fighting both to help protect these three workers and to ultimately protect our class with communist revolution!



No "sanctuary" under capitalism



The Sanctuary Movement in Austin and San Antonio, and many other church groups and social justice groups organized the protest at the ICE headquarters. At least one speaker raised the role of anti-immigrant and other forms of racism in keeping both immigrants and citizens increasingly exploited. Among the crowd of students and workers, the need for solidarity and some kind of radical change was clearly felt. Despite the mood of the masses, the politics of the organizers failed to connect increasing ICE terror to the world situation, and they neither offered any critique of capitalism, nor called for any kind of systemic change or revolution.

Some speeches were in Spanish, and approximately 50 immigrant workers facing deportation showed their support for the protest, but were afraid to join for fear of retribution at their hearings. Finally, a member of the Progressive Labor Party moved into the crowd to speak with some of the waiting immigrant workers, and all expressed interest in learning how to participate to build the movement to smash ICE and its racist, fascist terror.

Only PLP called for a revolutionary workers' movement in the factories, fields and army that could destroy racist ICE terror's capitalist source, instead of pleading for mercy and electing more Democrats. The Sanctuary organizers have no long term plan to address the needs of all immigrant workers in the area—let alone the needs of the international working class. Their movement is focused only on the exemplary, but short term, action of the three brave workers who took sanctuary in the church and spoke out politically.

The task of communists in PLP is to expose the reality that the storm clouds of World War III are getting closer as the imperialist rivalry between the U.S., Russian, and Chinese bosses sharpen. Wider imperialist wars threaten to murder millions of workers, and there can never be any "sanctuary" for workers under capitalism.

Nonviolence vs fighting back

The bosses' strategy of using racism, nationalism, and sexism to divide the international working class is enabled by many of these church-based groups like Sanctuary. On the one hand these groups attract many honest and committed antiracist workers and youth who aspire to become fighters and serve their sisters and brothers. It was clear from conversations that the workers and youth at the rally were open to antiracist, internationalist and anti-imperialist ideas.

Sanctuary's political leadership, on the other hand, is at best misguided, or at worst misled by the bosses' stooges when they insist that elections and a moral commitment to pacifism and nonviolent civil disobedience will solve our problems. Their insistence on these strategies actually puts the safety of workers like the three taking refuge inside the church at risk. PLP presents another strategy: organizing masses to fight back, and to fight for communism.

From dark night to red morning

The bosses try to divide and confuse our class with ideas like voting or that capitalism can be reformed, while terrorizing us with open racist police and ICE terror. But for all the bosses' money and cops, and as hopeless as our situation may seem, proof that this dark night will end is everywhere.

Even at this rally, the bosses could not stop the 50 immigrant workers facing possible deportation from being joined, shoulder to shoulder, by their native-born working class sisters and brothers. One of the Sanctuary ministers reminded the gathered workers and students of another dark night when the working class fought through and won- when thousands of immigrants were secretly sheltered from the Nazis by working-class families during World War II.

PLP fights to inherit the legacy of that mass working class anti-fascist resistance, as well as the legacy of the worker-led Red Army that ultimately smashed Nazi fascism and won the war. As workers have proven from the Paris Commune to the Bolshevik and Chinese revolutions, what the bosses fear most is a united working class armed with revolutionary communist politics. We will continue to fight alongside our sisters and brothers in groups like Sanctuary, making friends, building for May Day and,soon enough, building our own Red Army to smash this racist, terrorist capitalist system once and for all. This May Day, join us!✪

OUR FIGHT

✰Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✰The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✰Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✰While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✰Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✰Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✰Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✰Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✰Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✰Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

CONTACT US

Email
desafio.challenge@gmail.com
Mail
Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202
Internet
www.plp.org
challengenewspaper.wordpress.com
Twitter: @PLPchallenge
Facebook: Challenge Desafio

WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

U.S. imperialism battered by Brexit

The political sideshow of Brexit, Britain's chaotic divorce from the European Union, reflects the international crisis of capitalism. In Britain, as elsewhere, masses of workers have lost all confidence in the institutions that have sustained the bosses' profit system since World War II. Prime Minister Theresa May is a dead woman walking. In the latest poll, only 7 percent thought the government had handled the Brexit negotiations well (Guardian, 3/26). Upon resigning last November, the British transport minister called the Brexit mess "a failure of British statecraft on a scale unseen since the [1956] Suez crisis" (Reuters, 11/9/18). That was when the fading British Empire was forced to withdraw its troops from Egypt by a newly dominant U.S. imperialism.

Now the tables have turned. Rising Russian and Chinese capitalists are expanding their influence in Europe at the expense of a U.S. ruling class in decline—a trend that will accelerate if and when Britain, the most reliable U.S. ally, actually leaves the EU. Throughout Europe, ultra-nationalist and outright fascist parties are gaining strength at the expense of mainstream rulers. Post-World War II alliances are breaking down. As capitalism worldwide struggles with a lower rate of growth, sharper competition for markets and resources, and growing social unrest, the collapse of the U.S.-led liberal world order is accelerating.

Leave or stay, workers lose under capitalism

For the working class, the bosses' split over Brexit is a lose-lose proposition. If the "leave" faction prevails, up to 750,000 workers in Britain will lose their jobs (Forbes, 12/11/18). The British auto and aerospace industries could be decimated as foreign companies pull their factories out of the UK. Diabetics are stocking up on insulin out of fear that pharmaceutical imports from Europe will be disrupted. The UK's economy is contracting as the British pound loses value against the U.S. dollar, which makes almost everything—including fruits and vegetables—more expensive (New York Times, 4/1).

On the other hand, the "remain" faction, led by the finance capitalists centered in London, has already proven it has nothing to offer workers but a life of misery. These Big Fascists created the anti-working-class austerity program that fueled Brexit:

> *[T]he protracted campaign of budget cutting, started in 2010 by a government led by the Conservative Party, has delivered a monumental shift in British life. … crime rates, opioid addiction, infant mortality, childhood poverty and homelessness point to a deteriorating quality of life. … By 2020, reductions already set in motion will produce cuts to British social welfare programs exceeding $36 billion a year compared with a decade earlier, or more than $900 annually for every working-age person in the country* (NYT, 5/28/2018).

Meanwhile, a competing group of bosses—the Little Fascists—used racism to shift the blame from themselves to the EU and its relatively open immigration policies: "The number of EU migrants in the UK nearly tripled between 2004 and 2015, from about one million to over three million, almost totally due to an influx of citizens from newer members including Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania" (Council on Foreign Relations, 1/16).

As a result, the UK's foreign-born population has doubled over the last 15 years, to nearly 15 percent of the population. As British capitalists took full advantage of the cheap labor of white immigrants from Eastern Europe, they promoted the racist myth of African and Middle Eastern "terrorists" immigrating to the UK and taking workers' jobs. In fact, refugees and asylum seekers represent less than one-quarter of one percent of Britain's population, and barely 12,000 refugees from war-devastated Syria had been resettled there as of early 2018 (BBC, 4/24/18). These lies were promoted by mainstream liberal and conservative politicians, as well as more open fascist elements like British billionaire Aaron Banks, a close associate of Steve Bannon and Robert Mercer, two of President Donald Trump's most influential supporters. Banks worked with Little Fascist Nigel Farage in a dirty tricks campaign that helped the pro-Brexit campaign win a narrow electoral victory in 2016.





Brexit weakens U.S. in Europe

The post-World War II liberal world order was based on the U.S. funneling cheap Middle East oil to Western Europe while discouraging Soviet expansion with a "nuclear umbrella." Within the European Union, the UK, a major player in the oil industry and the largest foreign investor in the U.S., could always be counted on to defend the U.S. bosses' interests. Once the UK exits, German and French capitalist bosses, among others, will be freer to pursue their own interests. The EU will become less an ally and more a competitor for U.S. imperialism.

Today's EU is split on local economic issues as well as international policy issues. Germany backed the Nordstream-2 gas pipeline from Russia through the Baltic Sea to Germany, despite opposition by France and Denmark. When the U.S. fought hard against Nordstream-2, the German bosses made it clear they weren't willing to pay a big premium for natural gas piped in by the U.S. versus cheaper Russian gas.

On the military front, Poland, Romania, and Lithuania want U.S. bases on their soil to deter Russian expansion. But other EU countries, including Greece, Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands, are less enthusiastic about an expanded U.S. military presence. Turkey, a NATO member outside the EU, recently bought Russia's S400 anti-missile defense system despite U.S. threats not to sell Turkey its costly (and unproven) F35 fighter jets.

Under Donald Trump, the U.S. is using economic sanctions as a hammer to stop EU companies and countries from trading with Iran and China. This bullying tactic doesn't seem to be working, however. Italy has agreed to join China's massive Belt and Road Initiative to facilitate trade with Eurasia, Africa, and South America. At a March 26 meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Germany and France appeared to be less hostile to OBOR than in the past. China just bought 300 jets from the pan-European Airbus, "a huge blow" to U.S. Boeing (abcnews.go.com, 3/26). And the EU continues to resist U.S. demands to ban China's Huawei equipment from its next-generation, 5G telecommunications network (CNN.com, 3/2).

Assuming Britain does indeed leave the EU, more of these military and economic moves will go against the U.S. According to the "Thucydides Trap," war often ensues when a dominant power is threatened by a rising one. The probability of global war between a weakening U.S., a rising China, and a resurgent Russia is growing by the day. It is up to Progressive Labor Party to build our international communist movement to smash capitalism and turn imperialist war into a class war for communist revolution.✪

Water rally exposes liberal politicians

'I know you always like to call Democrats the more sophisticated fascists. I thought you were just paranoid, but this sh*t today showed me.'



NEWARK, NJ—Over two dozen protestors marched outside Newark Mayor Ras Baraka's "State of the City" address today. The goal of the protest was to shed more light on the water crisis occurring in Newark and other cities around the U.S. While the protest did that, it also exposed the liberal politicians for the fascists they really are. Many groups focus strictly on Trump and other open right-wingers as ushering in fascism, but Progressive Labor Party has always maintained that the liberals will be much more successful at getting the working class in line for what the capitalists have in store for us. Some of our friends are starting to realize that as our struggle sharpens.

Class struggle will expose liberals

The protest was organized by the Newark Water Coalition, a group trying to organize students and workers to fight for clean water. The organization began a few months ago with meetings twice a week, but this was the group's first action—a big step forward.

The action not only energized many who have been coming to the meetings, but it also exposed how the liberal politicians are going to be able to usher in fascism more successfully in the cities than the open white supremacists. As we marched outside the front entrance of the New Jersey Performing Art Center, a few members of the Newark Anti-Violence Coalition came out of the building to heckle the crowd, and called on the police to remove them.

The Newark Anti-Violence Coalition, started by Baraka before he became mayor, has been "fighting" police and gang violence in Newark. The group had a history of shutting down traffic in the street. Many of the members have now been able to work with City Hall and look at cops as their allies. Soon after a confrontation with these liberal fascists, the cops pushed the crowd to the other side of the street behind barricades.

This so-called revolutionary Mayor had a plan to work with the cops to try to shut us down immediately."

The fact that Baraka had to set up barricades and have the cops push the protestors back outside the event is actually a step backwards for him and the capitalist class he serves. Liberals always try to control the masses through winning them over with ideas. In his speech, Baraka spoke a lot about fighting gentrification and getting people jobs. Whether or not these things will come to fruition is not the point. What is clear is that liberal politicians need to address the issues that Black and Latin workers are concerned about to try to win them to believe that capitalism can be made to work for them. It seems to be working for the moment. The protests for clean water have been relatively small.

However, as the fightback continues, more and more workers and students will recognize that the liberals, through their words and deeds, owe their allegiance to the capitalist class.

City council tries to silence protestors

While the Mayor sends cops and his stooges to try to silence protestors, Council President Mildred Crump is doing it at the Newark City Council meetings. Over the last month, Crump (another one of the professional liberal politicians who has been on the council since 1994) had the police remove three speakers from the podium because they were using "inappropriate language." One of them used the word "damn" as he was talking about the lead water crisis.

Many people are working alongside legalistic groups like the American Civil Liberties Union (TAPinto 3/25/19), but it really is going to take a mass movement to stop the attacks on workers who are fighting back.

Class struggle will make our ideas shine

Members of PLP have been involved in this struggle and will continue to fight alongside students and workers to expose liberals as we fight for our class needs. While many of our friends still believe that workers can get power through voting for the "best" candidate, it is up to us communists to show them how this system really works. In this battle over the lead in our water, we have met some great young fighters. Many of them have been open to receiving copies of CHALLENGE and we hope to build a study group to further discuss our political philosophy and to sharpen the struggle. As one friend recently put it, "I know you always like to call Democrats the more sophisticated fascists and I thought you were just paranoid, but this sh*t today showed me."✪

Workers need medical attention; cops respond with violence

NEW YORK CITY, March 26—Outside of City Hall, 25 protesters marched and chanted to oppose police being the first responders to those in mental health crisis. Since June 2015, the racist New York cops have killed 14 people whose neighbors or family called for assistance. All but one of those killed were Black or Latin. Racism infects every aspect of working people's lives.

We are demanding that teams of mental health workers be the ones who answer such calls, and that they be reached by a system separate from 911, which goes right to the police. Several churches, the Police Reform Organizing Project (PROP), No New Jails, and Jewish Voice for Peace, and Progressive Labor Party (PLP) participated. Mental health professionals would tend to be compassionate toward their fellow workers. Cops are thugs for the bosses. They protect the bosses and their capitalist system. Their tendency is to shoot.

Overall, the racist police kill about 1,000 people a year in the U.S., of whom a quarter are mentally ill. Black, Latin, and indigenous workers are much more likely to be killed than white workers, and the police hardly ever suffer any consequences for their actions. So blatant is this behavior that the American Public Health Association, after a four-year struggle by young members, declared police violence to be a public health issue (endingpoliceviolence.com). Next week, the Mayor's task force on the issue is planning to announce their solution to the problem—training all police on how to respond to such calls.

This will never work. Police are trained to be violent, to behave in a military manner, and their racism and mistreatment of workers is ignored or supported by the bosses and their politicians. In fact, police are the arm of the capitalist state designed to control and intimidate workers and perpetuate the racist divisions that are necessary for U.S. capitalism to maintain its empire and profits. In several communities that have tried the Mayor's approach, it has failed because cops cannot be turned into caring 'social workers'. Certainly more community mental health treatment is needed but that issue is not even being addressed.

We chanted and passed out leaflets for 90 minutes and made several contacts. Representatives of every group present made speeches. The No New Jails speaker told of their campaign against the new jails being planned in each of the five NYC boroughs, saying the money should be invested in social services, jobs, education, and health care. The Progressive Labor Party speaker talked about the role of police in capitalist society and our upcoming May Day March. At May Day we will promote a vision of a communist world run by the working class for our needs with no exploitation and profiteering. Every participant and about 100 others received CHALLENGE. Our campaign will continue next week when we attend the Mayor's announcement of his bullshit plan.✪

Get ready for May Day with PLP!



BROOKLYN, April 3—Members of a community organization where Progressive Labor Party does political work participated in a preparation meeting to collect funds and plan the participation of friends in the May Day march. Thirty people, most immigrant workers from different countries, met with PLP during this international dinner. Two PL'ers members led the political program.

A young PL'er opened the event. He related a profound review and pictures on the history and beginnings of May Day and the eight hour day. During his presentation, the young leader informed the workers that May Day is a holiday all over the world except in the U.S., even though it was born in Chicago. He talked about how the bosses are always trying to erase workers struggles by rewriting history. Workers really paid attention to this history presentation. At the end there were many questions about his presentation and pictures.

Aftwards, veteran PLP comrade with a long history of struggle began her presentation asking the workers there several questions about their work. She showed several images of workers fighting each other while the bosses laugh. She also showed images of how we can unite and fight back. The participants liked that image so they asked for copies of it. She gave them a pamphlet about May Day in English, for those who are learning the language.

Many workers participated enthusiastically during the discussion on the importance of participating not only in the march, which will be led by PLP, but all the activities leading to May Day. This is the heritage left us by those who fought in the first May Day in Chicago in 1886 against the capitalist system. During the discussion we asked: How can we abolish capitalism once and for all and create workers power? Why do the bosses still rob us of our salaries and discriminate against us even though their politicians have passed "laws" against that? The young leader asked us to participate in the international workers day, that it belongs to us even if the U.S. bosses try to take it from us.

These questions generated a good discussion amongst those present. A worker from an agency that provides homeworkers, and many times has worked up to 24 hours straight while only getting 13 hours pay and has no rights, talked about her vibrant experience in confronting her boss. This opened the way for others to share their experiences. They all told stories of exploitation and discrimination, fear of being fired, and how the threat of deportation stops them from fighting back. There were several proposals of unity, on how to organize small struggles against the exploiting bosses at these and other sites where our friends work.

At the closing, PL'ers invited the people present to participate in the May Day march, so they can see on a small scale how the workers take the streets. We also had a delicious dinner, prepared by other comrades and families. We felt optimism at the commitment of those present.

The workers left the event with enthusiasm, thirsty to know more about the history of May Day. We left convinced that this is how we can expand the base of a communist movement, led by the Progressive Labor Party. This is how you make a revolution and create workers power for an egalitarian society without bosses and to end the profit system of exploitation. We still have a while until our communist march on May Day. We hope for a solid turnout and we'll continue to work enthusiastically to make it happen.✪

Workers organize vs. racist deportation machine

CHICAGO, March 30—Anti-deportation community organizers from three different Midwest states met in a forum to share their struggles and successes against the capitalist bosses' racist mass detention and deportation machine.

The forum demonstrated that even small collectives of committed anti-racist fighters can effectively shut down the fascist plans of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and prison profiteers, especially when they are committed to long-term struggle and building a base in working-class neigborhoods.

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) put forth a communist perspective on the movement against racist deportations. We stressed the importance of connecting the fights against the bosses' racist attacks on both Latin workers and Black workers as we build a movement against the capitalist system that exploits and oppresses us all.

Learning through the mass work

The focus of the event was to summarize the work of three fightback groups, including the groups of several Party members, and discuss ways that their continued support of each other could be beneficial. The forum was organized by a local collective with deep ties in immigrant neighborhoods around Chicago's west side. The struggles shared today spanned as far back as 2012, taking place across Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois.

Organizers from Illinois discussed how they were able to defeat a proposal to build an immigrant prison in the small rural town of Crete in 2012, by utilizing mass media and organizing a three-day march from Chicago to the town in order to build opposition. Their efforts coincided with mass anti-NATO demonstrations that were happening in Chicago at the time, and therefore were able to draw support from other anti-capitalist fighters.

Workers from Indiana shared their efforts organizing in the majority-Black city of Gary to defeat a similar proposal to build an immigration prison. By drawing a wide base of support from many organizations, including faith-based groups, workers and community organizers, they were able to build a protracted campaign against local politicians and the GEO Group, a private prison corporation.

They discussed how their struggle was boosted by the surge in national anti-racist fightback inspired by the anti-racist rebellion in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014. Comrades in this group talked about how their communist politics directed both their actions and line within the organization, and their collective base-building among other workers.

Members from a prison abolition organization in Michigan then detailed their recent success in preventing a prison from being built in a small town in western Michigan. They explained how the private prison corporations intentionally target smaller, economically-devastated towns with majority-white populations, and try to build support by the promise of "bringing jobs."

A key theme tonight centered on the liberal racism and anti-working class politics of non-profit immigrant rights groups. These groups are funded by and march in lockstep with the Democratic Party. Numerous instances were brought up in which organizations such as the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) intentionally withheld information about the prison proposals and sought to undermine more radical and anti-racist efforts to oppose the prisons.

Liberal reforms will never end the racist attacks against immigrant workers because reforms seek to steer the struggle into electoral politics and ultimately win more workers into supporting the capitalist system. The bosses' liberal fascism must be countered with a bold message of communist revolution, which seeks to unite all workers into a movement to destroy this system which profits off the detention and deportation of our class sisters and brothers.

Building working-class consciousness

Fighters also discussed the ongoing work and lessons they've continued to learn. PL'ers said class struggle teaches the working class to fight and build a higher class-consciousness. Wins and losses are short-lived due to the nature of the reform. The ultimate goal has to be smashing the capitalist system that keeps workers and students on this hamster wheel of reformism.

Fighting alongside the masses against the bosses, their cronies, and their institutions is a mandatory step in building revolutionary consciousness and resolve. Equally mandatory is sharing these experiences in communal spaces and continuing to be bold about the line, including distributing CHALLENGE.

Our collective knowledge and skills in fighting immigrant prisons is set to be tested once again, as the mayor and town council of the small town of Dwight, Illinois have tentatively approved the construction of a detention center by Immigrant Centers of America.

Onward to another battle against the racist capitalists! Onward to international communist revolution!✪

Racist oppression, a daily horror for workers

NEW YORK CITY, April 1—The daily oppression that workers face is what makes capitalism a system worthy of destruction. From the mistreatment on public benefit lines to outright abuse in job centers, the everyday racism that Black and Latin women workers face is proof that capitalism does not serve us.

We continue to witness how the enforcers of the system—the police, security guards—scare and discipline the working class into staying in line. We also witness how public service workers who are hired to serve their class sisters and brothers are won to doing the opposite. Under capitalism, jobs that are meant to be helpful turn into the opposite.

Only under communism can we organize a society that is designed to serve, not oppress, the working class.

Mother wants benefits for child, gets terrorized instead

Headley took her baby boy to a public benefits office to investigate why the City stopped paying for the baby to go to daycare while she worked cleaning offices. Instead, the City took away her child and arrested her.

She had waited for over two hours only to find that it would take another week to reconnect her childcare allowance. To find out the status of her November application for cash allowance she had to take another number. There were no seats in the waiting room, so Headley could only sit on the floor next to her baby's carriage. A security guard viciously ordered her to get up and, in ten minutes, returned with two cops. She picked up her child and rose to her feet. The cop threatened to take her to central booking and her son to the City child welfare agency. When she expressed anger and turned to go, the cop lunged at her. Two cops restrained her while two guards stripped her shrieking child out of her arms.

The capitalist liberal New York Times admits that this kind of abuse is not unusual. What the Times does not admit is that U.S. capitalism was born out of the racist slave trade and slavery and today capitalism all over the world still cannot exist without constant racist oppression.

Racism takes a heavy toll

Similarly, one of Progressive Labor Party, a single mother of a seven-year old, has endured this kind of racist mistreatment for years. She has suffered a continual series of terminations, denials, and, reapplications. Currently, she is expecting to be denied a huge portion of what is owed her for back underpayments, and may not get her tax refund because she didn't provided several documents—all discovered after hours and days wasted traveling and waiting.

Many kinds of daily abuses against workers are repeated millions of times around the world. Whether it's being bombed in Yemen by U.S. made bombs, or detained in concentration camps at the U.S./Mexico border while separated from your children, or getting arrested while applying for benefits for your child in New York City, capitalism has got to go.

The defenders of the system

Recently our comrade witnessed a similar horror scene at a job center in Manhattan. A young Latin woman entered and walked up to the customer service window with a brief question. The representative rudely responded, "Do not ask me anything. Go and stand in line!" Angered, the young worker persisted, and in three minutes four cops and three security goons rushed from the back room to detain her. In the process she was thrown to the floor and her head was slammed against the wall. They escorted her outside to be arrested.

The PL'er and about 20 other bystanders were warned that if they recorded this racist outrage on cell phones, their cases would be closed and they would be kicked out of the center.

Make friends, march on May Day, and fight back

The PL'er said, "I try to make contacts whenever I have to go for services or references. I try to follow up these new friends, along with family and old friends giving them CHALLENGEs. I stress that marching on May Day will build the movement we need to fight back against this oppression and finally to end it for good. We need to take over the world and build a society planned and run by working people."✪

Letter: Smollett incident reveals pervasiveness of sexist culture

Jussie Smollett is a young, gay Black actor accused of having reported a faked racist and anti-gay attack in the city of Chicago last month. There was a lot of media coverage, especially after the historically racist Chicago police concluded their investigation of the matter, charging that Smollet himself masterminded the whole thing in a vulgar attempt to get more money for his acting role on Empire, *a popular TV series. On March 26 the Chicago prosecutor announced they are dropping charges. Below is an analysis of the episode.*

Having face-to-face conversations about this situation, which include friends' responses to comments on social media, has been a good opportunity to share the Progressive Labor Party's line on sexism, elitism, and capitalist opportunism. Popular culture and entertainment is a major way that the bosses spread their racism, all forms of sexism, ableism (discrimination against disabled people), and envy of abusive capitalist culture. Instead of dismissing the conversations, I pointed out ways that sexism is at the heart of many of the derogatory comments aimed at Smollett, an openly gay man, and also how popular culture and celebrity gossip has been used to subvert the working class's attention away from necessary criticisms of capitalism, which promotes and profits from sexism.

Capitalists silence abuse survivors

One reactionary response to Smollett's situation is that some say they don't automatically believe or support women when they come out about physical or sexual abuse. In reality, capitalist society has always punished working-class women, and those without status and power, for standing up and defending themselves against abuse. We have no way of knowing exactly what happened in this case; the practice of silencing, shaming, and punishing abuse survivors, particularly when the abuser is white and not part of the working class, has always served the bosses. It's one of the ways they maintain control.

Another case that has received significant attention recently is that of Cyntoia Brown. She has spent the last 15 years in prison for the crime of killing a man she said wouldn't let her leave his house and was making increasingly aggressive sexual advances towards her. She was 16 years old at the time and had been abused and forced into prostitution by the pimp she lived with.



Abusers have long been protected by the ruling class' courts and cops, while abuse survivors have been villainized, disbelieved, and punished. When the abusers are male, white, and rich (for example, Harvey Weinstein, Brock Turner, Donald Trump, Brett Kavanaugh, Larry Nassar, just to name a few) their crimes can go on for decades without attention, until it serves the purpose of political or pop cultural distraction. Through the ruling-class tool of sexism, many working-class men are led to believe they are superior to the women around them and act in the same abusive manner. While these men don't have the same protections in the courts as the ruling class, women and girls have even less protections under the legal system.

The investigation of Smollett's case was accelerated because of his fame. Chicago cops have a staggering rate of unsolved homicide and non-fatal assault cases. "Last year, the Chicago Police Department solved only about 17 percent of the homicides committed. The clearance rate, as it's called, for nonfatal shootings was an abysmal five percent" (Chicago Tribune, 8/24/18). Protection under the law for working-class people, more so for women, is not high on the priority list in the city, while cop and court abuses continually grow. The priority is furthering the terrorism that racist and sexist cops use to control the working class, in the form of the proposed cop academy. (Chicago already spends $1.5 billion on racist cops, and spends 300 percent more on them than on public health, family and support services, transportation, and planning and development for affordable housing, etc. Mayor Rahm Emanuel closed 50 schools in 2013, of which six were in the area of the cop academy [The Nation, 10/16/2017]).

Ruling class opportunism fueled the speed of Smollett's investigation, not justice

We cannot fall in the trap of sexist justifications for disbelieving assault survivors, with this case being used as the bait. Fighting sexism, in all its forms, is integral to defeating the ruling class and its capitalist system. A united effort against a culture of abuse against those with less power and protection must be prioritized in our communist battle against capitalism and its pervasive culture. The default should be fighting the system that victimizes all workers.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.



Black mayor puts profits over youth

Baltimore's Black mayor Catherine Pugh was recently busted lining her pockets with two corrupt book deals. Catherine Pugh sold half a million dollars worth of her self-published "Healthy Holly" books to the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS), a hospital where she sits on the board. Found out after omitting the income on her earnings disclosure to the General Assembly, a supposedly remorseful Pugh resigned from her seat on the board and nixed the final shipment of the children's story, relinquishing the final $100,000 payment. Pugh also made a lucrative book deal with Kaiser Health Systems, who then were awarded a contract to provide healthcare to City workers. Today, she was forced to take a leave from her job, supposedly because of illness.

Her actions however are only one chapter in the unscrupulous trades that happen among UMMS bigwigs. Nine of the 30 members have taken leave or resigned due to crooked contracts, some worth more than two million dollars. Pugh called her actions "a regrettable mistake" during a short media statement on March 28, but we know there's no error. This is a capitalist money hungry scheme.

The mayor had wanted in us to believe her motives were about nurturing youth in the city where the University of Maryland itself reports that only 45 percent of its youth live in "hardship free" healthy environments. This means these youth reportedly had stable food and housing, adequate heating and cooling, payable doctor visits and prescription access. Many of the stories never even reached young learners as tens of thousands of books sit in city school warehouses or are unaccounted for.

Baltimore, branded as the city that reads in 1988, is now mocked by residents as the city that bleeds. (The slogan was declared by then newly elected Mayor Kurt Schmoke in his inaugural address. It was more aspirational than descriptive: in a city of over 700,000, an estimated 200,000 adults were considered functionally illiterate). With a police force and housing authority oozing misconduct and leaders who would rather line their pockets by embezzlement (former mayor Shelia Dixon), no-bid contract under-dealing in schools (superintendent Dallas Dance) and now a sick medical system, it's time to read between the lines.

Capitalist leaders are in it for themselves. Whether the capitalist leadership is white or Black, these politicians serve their ruling class. The working class must rise to power and be in it for ourselves.

★★★★★

#dontvoterevolt!

On my drive to work, while listening to one of my favorite radio stations, there was an interview with an officer of the National League of Women Voters who talked about voter disenfranchisement, tactics used by those in power to keep people from voting, and resulting low turn-out for elections. Some of the reasons given for people not voting were lack of knowledge about the process, lack of information about the candidates, and what I interpreted as people's overall detachment, without a reason for that detachment.

What was missing from the discussion was the possibility of a purposeful choice to not participate in dead-end politics, especially in a major industrial city like Chicago. Often, the working class is not given credit for choosing not to fall for politicktions' lies about this time being different; this time if we choose one of them it'll work out; this time we can vote for people who look like those most oppressed in a city (typically based on race and gender and/or sex) and it'll all be better. Lies, lies, lies! We can see from the sham of the national political scene, where everyone and anyone has thrown their hats into the ring as a desperate attempt to attract workers to the polls, that the ruling class is desperate to uphold our investment in their process.

Locally, two Black women are vying for the mayoral seat in the city. Both have records of betraying workers by operating as protectors and upholders of the racist cop and political establishments. It's a "lose-lose" situation for our class. Instead of buying into their lies about "this time," the working class of every city should follow its instincts and stay out of the bosses voting booths. As members of PLP, we must do our part of building among other workers, fighting with them, and putting forward the line of communist revolution, being led by our Party, as the only solution. #DontVoteRevolt!

★★★★★

Socialism is revisionism

The 3/30 CHALLENGE article on democratic socialism describing a program of multi-cultural imperialism and liberal fascism to enable U.S. rulers to wage war on their imperialist rivals was correct.

However the article, like many others in CHALLENGE about socialism, continues to confuse us.

Like "phony socialists" (as opposed to real?).

"Boss sponsored socialism" (as opposed to worker sponsored?).

And "socialists" (as opposed to socialists.)

I think PLP's line on socialism should be more explanatory.

All the socialist revolutions I studied retain capitalist and class privileges, becoming state-capitalist systems themselves whose leaders chose to win workers to national rather than class ideology. As PLP's document Road to Revolution III said, "Communists who begin as apologists for capitalism become capitalists themselves" and "socialist reforms without proletarian dictatorship is a fairy tale."

I believe socialism is revisionism—the ideas and practice of the class enemy within the communist movement. Socialism seeks to ride the revolutionary tide of world history by appearing in militant disguises but its essence is counter-revolutionary. It seeks to prevent and distort the revolutionary content of Marxism/Leninism and to enable the ruling class to hold onto power during periods of economic crisis and revolutions they create.

Socialism is revisionism because it engages in economic and reform struggles without introducing communist ideas. The primary source of communist power is the masses' understanding and implementation of communist ideas. As Road to Revolution IV said, "No proletarian dictatorship has ever fought to implement communist principles, and no proletarian dictatorship remains standing in the world today."

CHALLENGE note: We welcome readers to send in comments on the analysis of socialism on page 8.

★★★★★

One Day of Life exposes capitalism as villian

Manlio Argueta's novel *One Day of Life* (1980) about the exploitation of peasants by the U.S.-backed landlord government of El Salvador confronts capitalist rationalizations. It specifically counters U.S. support for fascist terror and murder, and the anticommunist ideology used to justify it.

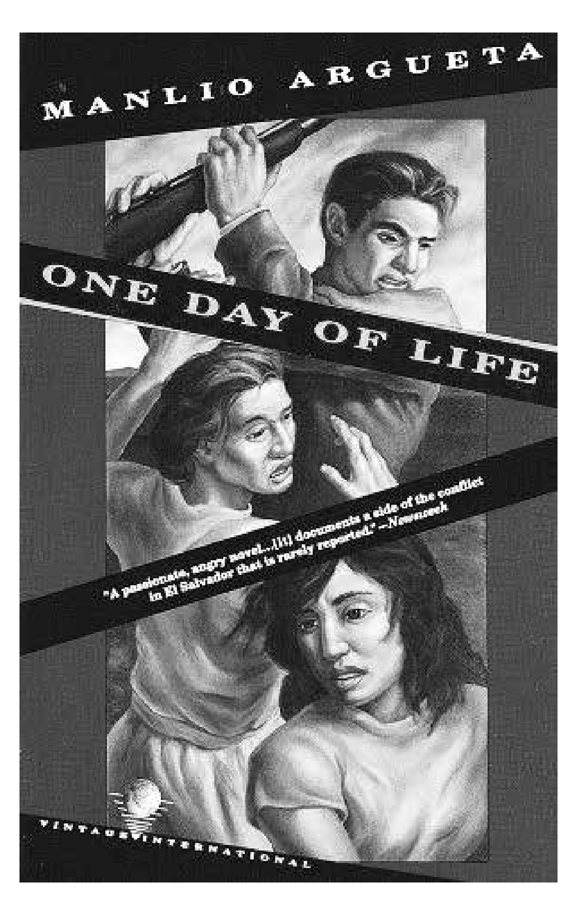
The novel's subject is severe exploitation in the Marxist sense – value taken from the peasants' labor by keeping their standard of living so low that many children die of starvation. Exploitation is enforced by terror and legitimized by branding all peasants who do anything to raise their income as communists and, therefore, legitimate targets for torture and murder.

Traditional Roman Catholicism is used by the exploiters to train the peasants in fatalistic acquiescence. After the 2nd Vatican Council in the early 1960s "new priests" arrive, they teach the peasants to form buyers' and sellers' co-operatives that raise their standard of living. Then the National Guardsmen start to patrol Chalate, asking about the "communist priests." The Guard tortures one of the "new priests" and we hear no more about them.

The U.S. Army Special Forces, the "Green Berets," train the National Guardsmen in terror, torture, and murder. They feed them a U.S. diet to bulk them up, so that they look and feel superior to the peasants who cannot afford protein.

This primes the young peasant recruits to accept their indoctrination which is:

- "any peasant unsatisfied with his traditional poverty-stricken life is a communist and "enemy of democracy."
- "true religion" comes from the United States, in the form of fundamentalist Protestant sects, which are imported from the United States to re-indoctrinate the peasants in fatalism and anticommunism.
- peasants are poor not because they are exploited but because (a) they are part Indian, and "all Indians are lazy"; (b) there are too many peasants, because "all women are wh*res."



Two chapters, "The Authorities" and "Them," represent Argueta's attempt to depict the ideology of a young peasant man who is successfully indoctrinated by the U.S. to terrorize, torture, and kill peasant families from his own village. The U.S. can trainers pound anticommunism, machismo, racism, and fundamentalist Protestantism into the heads of the trainees.

Education is used to identify peasant candidates for the National Guard. The Guardsman has made it through 6th grade, and so is recruited to be a fascist killer—another example of how capitalist education serves only the interests of the rich by indoctrinating the working class with sexist, racist and imperialist ideas to keep us divided.

Exploitation of the poor by the rich is the central theme. Lupe Guardado, the main narrator, comes to understand that the peasants are poor BECAUSE the landowners are rich. She is instructed by Chepe, her husband, Justino, her son, and Helio, her son-in-law, all of whom are tortured and murdered by the U.S.-trained National Guardsmen.

Before he is tortured and murdered by the U.S.-trained National Guardsmen, Chepe tells Lupe that God is conscience, and conscience is the poor. In short, "God is the poor." The struggle of life is not to gain paradise after death, but to win a paradise on earth.

The "paradise" we need to struggle for is an egalitarian communist world where the capitalist ideas of sexism and racism are rejected and workers share the fruits of their own labor.

Through this novel, readers are introduced to the essential evil of the capitalist system, and the realities of U.S. brutality, mass murder, and exploitation in Latin America.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from the capitalist press that may be of use for our readers.
NYT=New York Times

Boeing's profit drive kills 346 passengers

NYT, 3/22—As the pilots of the doomed Boeing jets in Ethiopia and Indonesia fought to control their planes, they lacked two notable safety features in their cockpits.

One reason: Boeing charged extra for them.

For Boeing and other aircraft manufacturers,…charging to upgrade a standard plane can be lucrative. Top airlines…must pay handsomely…[for] features [that] involve communication or safety systems…more fundamental to the plane's operations….

"They're critical and cost almost nothing…. Boeing charges for them because it can. But they're vital for safety….It has become a "great profit center" for the manufacturer.

Less than 40 Seconds to avoid crash

NYT, 3/25,—During flight simulations recreating the problems with the doomed Lion Air plane, pilots…had less than 40 seconds to override an automated system on Boeing's new jets and avert disaster.

The pilots tested a crisis situation similar to what…went wrong in the Lion Air crash in Indonesia….A single sensor failed….

Once that happened, the pilots had just moments to…avoid an unrecoverable nosedive of the Boeing 737 Max….

The software…left little room for error….

Compounding the flaws, the pilots received limited training about the system before the first crash. During the final minutes, the captain of the Lion Air flight flipped through a technical manual trying to figure out what was happening….

John Cox, an aviation safety consultant and a former 737 pilot, said…. "There is a limited window to solve this problem, and this crew didn't even know this system existed."



OxyContin producers reaped million$, killed over 200,000

NYT, 3/28—…Members of the [Sackler] family that owns [OxyContin] began methodically erasing a paper trail of profits and shifting hundreds of millions of dollars from the business to themselves through offshore entities….

…Details allege systematic fraud…that distributed alarming amounts of prescription painkillers amid a rising epidemic of abuse that has killed….more than 200,000…in the United States from overdoses involving illegal opioids….

The Sacklers are one of the richest families in America.

…The family created a new company to sell opioids called Rhodes…as a "launching pad" for the Sacklers because of the crisis surrounding Oxy Contin…Distributors turned "a collective blind eye as orders for opioids…skyrocketed" and drugs known to be dangerous "came to be dispensed like candy."

The company fired employees who alerted executives to pharmacies who repeatedly requested excessive orders….

Purdue Pharma [is] the company…primarily responsible for unleashing the current opioid epidemic by misleading doctors about OxyContin's dangers and ignoring evidence that the drug was being abused.

Two socialist trends & the fight away from workers' power

The bosses are promoting socialist politicians like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) as the answer to the deepening crisis of capitalism. CHALLENGE, over several issues, will look at how reformist socialist leaders like Sanders and AOC are and have historically betrayed the working class by building nationalism and anti-communism to help the bosses' move towards growing fascism and war.

Previously we wrote about how the current crop of reformist socialists are building nationalism and laying the basis for liberal led fascism and how the Green New Deal is a blueprint for building militarism and preparing the working class to accept the bosses' war plans. In this issue, we look at the history of the two trends in the early socialist movement, revolutionary socialism and reformist socialism.



A line can be drawn from the early revolutionary socialists to the communist led revolutions in Russia and China to Progressive Labor Party (PLP) today. Reformist socialism, on the other hand, has been a historic weight trying to hold back the working class from the time of the early socialist movement to the capitalist apologists like Sanders and AOC trying to save the bosses' system at the expense of the working class.

Two socialist trends

As early as when Marx was writing *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848 these two trends in socialism existed. Marx saw the leadership of the reform socialists as forces who were scared of the working class coming to power and sought reforms lest the working class rebel:

> *The Socialistic bourgeois want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting therefrom. They desire the existing state of society, minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements. They wish… that the proletariat should remain within the bounds of existing society, but should cast away all its hateful ideas concerning the bourgeoisie.* (The Communist Manifesto)

Revolutionary socialism, saw the horrible conditions of the working class under capitalism, and understood that only a society led by the working class could create a system that served the interests of the great majority of people.

Marx, the Bolsheviks, and Chinese Communists developed in theory and set out to build revolutionary socialism as a society based on workers seizing power through revolution and a step towards communism. Revolutionary socialists seized the forces of production from the capitalist class and unleashed the power of the working class in leading the building of a society based on production for need instead of profit. In both Russia and China the condition of the working class monumentally improved and hundreds of millions of workers had a chance to play a role in leading society.

Socialism fails workers

However, the early communists were wrong in their belief that socialism could eventually lead to communism. PLP was formed in 1965 in response to the Soviet Union returning to capitalism and the Communist Party U.S.A. abandoning the fight for workers revolution.

PLP initially fought for a socialist society under the leadership of the working class as part of the road to a communist society. Based on our practice and looking at how Russia and China went back to capitalism, we came to see that socialism, even under the leadership of the working class and a communist party, kept too much of capitalism alive in the form of wages and divisions within the working class. These divisions eventually led society back towards capitalism.

Today PLP fights for communist revolution and the immediate building of a communist society led by the international working class, with distribution of goods based on need instead of wages. This new way forward, first explained in our document Road to Revolution IV, is the legacy of many millions of workers who have fought for workers' power and an end to capitalism.

In the U.S., the early socialist movement also reflected both revolutionary and reformist socialism. The Socialist Party of America (SPA) was the major socialist organization in the U.S. It encompassed both reformers and people fighting for workers revolution and an egalitarian society. Under the leadership of its founder, Eugene V. Debs, the capitalist reformers were the dominant force.

A history of reform

Debs rose to national prominence, as the President of the American Railroad Union (ARU) by betraying the workers during the railroad strike of 1894.

The strike shut down the railroad. Debs became terrified of the workers' anger at the railroad bosses. He urged the union locals to stop the militancy. Debs' efforts at holding back the workers failed and the U.S. President Grover Cleveland, with Debs' support, sent Federal troops to end the strike. (Encyclopedia Britannica)

In 1901 Debs founded SPA. The SPA ran in elections to win reforms of capitalism. Debs ran for President in 1904 and got over six percent of the vote. Even while claiming to fight for the interests of the working class the SPA sought a peaceful relationship with the capitalists. The SPA so feared disrupting capitalism that they allowed many blatantly anti-working-class ideas to be prominent within the organization. While Karl Marx fought for unity of Black and white workers as necessary to defeat capitalism, notably the SPA supported official racism.

The following qoutes are taken from Viewpoint Magazine (3/29/16): "Socialist branches everywhere in the South were "Jim Crowed" and the vast majority accepted only whites."

The SPA strategy of reforming capitalism was shortly overtaken by the rise of the class struggle.

> *Beginning in about 1910, the economic and political universes appeared to shatter, offering wider opportunities for socialists. Between 1909 and 1913, mass and sometimes violent strikes swept across the Western world....In New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Chicago, among other centers…workers walked off the job to win higher wages, improved conditions, and union recognition…Simultaneously, the most radical labor organization ever to arise in the United States, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), emerged from relative obscurity to lead two general strikes in the textile industry.*

The strikes were "part of a global labor uprising … Germany, France, and Britain required military intervention to quell class conflict…The clash between revolutionary doctrine and reformist practice emerged clearly in 1912 and 1913 when the SPA divided internally over the issue of confrontation and violence. In 1913 the party majority ousted the IWW's William D. Haywood from the party's national executive committee. Haywood's [expulsion] proved that despite its revolutionary rhetoric, the SPA majority in practice followed [reformism]."

Worker-led communist revolution is the only solution

Shortly after Haywood's expulsion, the 1917 Russian Revolution created the opportunity for revolutionary sections of the working class to form an international communist movement fighting for workers' power across the globe. In the U.S., workers with a revolutionary outlook left the SPA and shortly formed the Communist Party, which over the next 35 years was a leading force organizing for workers revolution. William Haywood went to the Soviet Union to become a leader of the international communist movement. The SPA became a shadow of its former self, eventually losing the bulk of its reformist base to the Democratic Party and completely abandoning any pretense of fighting for workers' power.

The working class is the future of society. Every movement that trusts the bosses over the workers to run society will inevitably support the capitalists in time of crisis and when the working class has the opportunity to advance the fight for power. The capitalists will use bourgeois socialists to build movements to keep the ruling class in power. Only communist revolution for workers' power will lead to a society led by and for the working class.✪

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